

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 0773

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, AKB, BQG
SUBJECT: ABRASIMOV INTERVIEW: RUDOLF HESS AND SPANDAU PRISON

REF: BONN 5888

SUMMARY: ON 4 APRIL, ABRASIMOV REPEATED PUBLICLY SOVIET HARD
LINE POSITION ON RELEASE OF HESS, AVOIDED QUESTION OF DISPOSITION
OF HESS' REMAINS, AND INDICATED THERE IS SOME DOUBT ON DISPOSITION
TO BE MADE OF SPANDAU PRISON AFTER HESS' DEATH. END SUMMARY

1. DURING THE 4 APRIL DISCUSSION OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE
GDR ABRASIMOV WITH THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION
IN WEST BERLIN, THE SUBJECT OF RUDOLF HESS AND SPANDAU PRISON
WAS RAISED. IN REACTION TO A QUESTION ON THE RELEASE OF HESS,
ABRASIMOV IS QUOTED IN 5 APRIL TAGESPIEGEL AS HAVING RESPONDED,
"RELEASE OF THIS WAR CRIMINAL WOULD MEAN AMNESTY TOWARDS FASCISM
AND FOR ALL THOSE WHO REPRESENTED IT AND FOLLOWED ITS INHUMAN
DOCTRINE. WHAT REASONS WOULD SPEAK FOR EARLY DISMISSAL?

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BASED ON WHICH MERITS SHOULD HE BE RELEASED?" COMMENT:
THIS REFLECTS THE SOVIET POSITION AS WE HAVE KNOWN IT.
EVEN THOUGH SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE FRG FALIN HAS
GIVEN THE IMPRESSION TO THE FRG (REFTEL) THAT THE SOVIETS
MAY HAVE SOME FLEXIBILITY ON THIS MATTER, WE SUSPECT
THAT FALIN IS ATTEMPTING TO GAIN WHATEVER CAPITAL HE
CAN BE APPEARING TO BE FLEXIBLE AND NOT THAT HE IS INDI-

CATING A MOSCOW POSITION AT VARIANCE WITH THE POSITION THAT ABRASIMOV HAS ONCE AGAIN MADE KNOWN THIS TIME IN A PUBLIC FORUM. END COMMENT.

2. TAGESPIEGEL ALSO REPORTED THAT ABRASIMOV WAS ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE SPANDAU PRISON BUILDING. ABRASIMOV'S ANSWER WAS THAT THIS QUESTION WILL BE DECIDED AFTER THE DEATH OF HESS. COMMENT: AS DEPARTEMENT IS AWARE, THE ALLIED VIEW IS THAT THERE IS NO NEED TO REACH A DECISION ON THE POST-HESS STATUS OF THE BUILDING, WHICH WILL REVERT TO BRITISH CONTROL. END COMMENT.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT OFF THE RECORD, ABRASIMOV INDICATED THAT ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE SOVIET POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE RELEASE OF HESS, WAS THAT HESS HAD NOT REPENTED HIS FASCIST IDEAS WHILE IN PRISON. COMMENT: THIS TOO HAS BEEN A CUSTOMARY REMARK OF THE SOVIETS AND IS SOMEWHAT ABSURD, UNLESS THE SOVIETS EXPECT HESS TO BECKON ONE OR ALL OF THE FOUR GOVERNORS OR THEIR SUPERIORS FOR A SPECIAL AUDIENCE IN ORDER TO CONFESS THAT HE HAS REPENTED HIS FASCIST IDEAS. THERE REALLY WOULD BE NO OTHER WAY FOR A REPENTANCE TO BE MADE, SINCE HESS IS (TECHNICALLY) NOT PERMITTED TO SPEAK TO OTHER PRISON ATTENDANTS AND IT IS LIKELY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD OBJECT TO HESS' DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT OF FASCISM WITH HIS VISITING RELATIVES. END COMMENT.
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4. WE ARE ALSO ADVISED THAT ABRASIMOV WAS ASKED WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HESS' BODY IN THE EVENT OF HIS DEATH AT SPANDAU. HIS OFF-THE-RECORD ANSWER WAS THAT THE DECISION WILL BE MADE AT THE TIME OF HESS' DEATH. COMMENT: ASSUMING THAT THIS REPORT IS ACCURATE, WHICH WE BELIEVE IT IS, ABRASIMOV IS EITHER SHOWING A RESPECT FOR THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF QUADRIPARTITE EXCHANGES (WHICH WE DOUBT) OR SHOWING RELUCTANCE TO ADMIT PUBLICLY THAT THE FOUR POWERS HAVE AGREED TO CREMATE HESS UPON HIS DEATH. END COMMENT. GEORGE

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